

MATTHEWS VETERANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

October 4, 2017

Minutes

Chairperson Fisk Outwater called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at Matthews Town Hall with a quorum present.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Fisk asked for a moment of silence to remember the victims of the tragedies in Puerto Rico and Las Vegas.

Committee Members present: Fisk Outwater, Tom Cannon, Terry Price, Gregg Smith, Jack Santaniello, Angelo Renguso, Amanda Kohout, Janet Perkins, Larry Stawicki, Kathleen Wilsbach, Fred Baylor, Nate Huggins, Ilse York, Neil Broome, and Michael Vento.

Guests welcomed: John Urban, ToM Commissioner; Hazen Blodgett, Town Manager; Hall of Fame organizers and veterans, David Brodie, Curtis Drafton, and Bill Douglas; and Rachel, Student from Winthrop University. Hazen Blodgett sat in for Rad Pate who is recovering from surgery.

Minutes of September 6, 2017. The minutes were approved as transmitted. However, after the meeting Gregg Smith told the secretary that guests attending the August 2017 MVAC meeting are Charlene and Jeff Thompson not McGuire as listed in minutes.

David Brodie, organizer for the Veterans Hall of Fame, introduced the mission endorsed by the State of North Carolina. Education about veterans both past and present and getting their stories is the primary function. The Hall of Fame is intended to inspire youth and the community. Beginning May of 2018, 15 veterans will be inducted into the Veterans Hall of Fame. Gregg Smith has been named Vice-Chairman. The following statistics were given: Vets in State (800,000) and Homeless Vets (10,000). Nike is financially backing the Veterans Hall of Fame and capital campaign to build in Charlotte has begun.

Old Business:

1. Subcommittee 1. Tom Cannon reported on the following:

a. A MVAC tri-fold is being developed.

b. *The Charlotte Observer* is digitally printing the date of the MVAC meetings. Follow up monthly with the Observer. Contact will be made with the *Matthews-Mint Hill Weekly* editor for MVAC meeting dates and events.

c. Tom has written an elevator speech to be used by the ToM Mayor, Commissioners, and MVAC committee members. Tom is planning to have this speech reduced and coated in plastic as an easy aide to explain the mission of MVAC. Hazen noted that the ToM has a 30,000 population.

2. Subcommittee 2. Amanda Kohout will continue to publish a list of events for veterans. Amanda has suggested that MVAC may want to evolve to link with Carolina Veterans Commission website which includes a calendar of events.

3. Subcommittee 3. No report. Dessi Dufresne's father died while she was on vacation in Japan. Terry Price volunteered to research a fitting organization for MVAC to donate to in memory of Dessi's father.

4. Subcommittee 4. No report.

5. Fisk said that the executive committee is working on refreshing MVAC subcommittee goals and responsibilities and reassignments if necessary.

6. MVAC Bylaw changes are moving forward this month for ToM approval. SOPs will stay in committee for any changes.

New Business:

1. Treasurer Jack Santaniello reported total funds of \$3,203.00 are available for fiscal year 2018. An additional expenditure has been added to the budget for Vietnam Exhibit card stock posters for \$144.79.

2. Chairperson's comments.

a. Fisk asked for a volunteer to research Honor Flight status. Ilse York volunteered.

b. There has been no feedback on Joe Bochicchio's radio program.

c. Fisk reported that space for the Vietnam/Korea MVAC exhibit is not available for the entire exhibit time in May on the main floor of the ToM Community Center. Two rooms are available upstairs. Fisk asked Hazen if MVAC could use the Board Room and Council Chambers in Town Hall for the exhibits as it would be a good central location. Hazen suggested that the calendar for those rooms be checked with Town Clerk. In addition, Fisk said that veterans will be welcome to add items to exhibits, but must stay with their personal items for safety purposes.

d. Fisk had a handout of additional comments (consent items) for committee members as follows: Troop counts overseas, events available to MVAC for participation, NCServes Metrolina 2nd year anniversary meeting, group photo at November meeting, Veterans Breakfast, meetings that Chair and Vice Chair will attend and a list of invites for future MVAC meetings.

e. Ten MVAC members' terms expire in December. Original applications were passed to those individuals to indicate if they want their applications to be forwarded to ToM for an additional two-year term. Results in November.

f. Partnering with the Matthews Alive Festival as a ToM committee and the possibility of having a table and a veterans parade at that event was discussed. Fisk will follow up.

3. Open Comments.

a. Hazen Blogget, Town Manager, reminded the MVAC of the Rotary Club breakfast for veterans at the Levine Center on November 6th at 11:30 a.m. This is a free event. Captain Brian Stewart will be the keynote speaker.

b. Gregg Smith announced that WWII Vet John Crump of VFW Post in Indian Trail will be awarded France's Medal of Honor (Croix de Guerre) on November 11th.

c. Neil Broome is still researching Gold Star and Blue Star groups.

d. Fisk asked Larry Stawicki to get more information regarding deceased veterans in area connected to Gold Star mothers.

e. Larry noted that the Retiring of Colors flag has a brass grommet that can be removed and given to veterans. Tom Cannon mentioned that the Boy Scouts retire Colors on a regular basis.

f. Commissioner John Urban said that taking care of homeless vets is crucial. Local sources of temporary help are: Matthews Free Medical Clinic, the Matthews Help Center and the Red Brick organization; and, that the town of Monroe is working on a shelter. The Commissioner suggested that the MVAC may want to consider becoming a non-profit to help veterans. Fisk noted that Matthews Novant Hospital has a special day of recognition for veterans. Fisk would also like to form a group within the community called "Friends of MVAC." Fisk named some top problems faced by veterans: relationships, finances, and health issues. Ilse York also mentioned the Turning Point in Monroe as a resource, and that she will contact the Free Medical Clinic and Help Center in Matthews to find out what services there are for veterans.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Submitted by:
Kathleen Wilsbach, Secretary